

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1–8 and 18, as discussed below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A surgical instrument for treating female urinary stress incontinence comprising:

- a) a sling contoured to the anatomical configuration of the mid-urethra, proximal ~~urethra~~ urethra, and base of the bladder for implanting into the lower abdomen of a ~~female~~ female; the sling providing support to mid-urethral and bladder neck sphincteric continence sites as well as support for the base of the bladder, said sling defining in part a tissue remodeling portion fixedly attached to and surrounding a mesh section; and
- b) a sling transfer instrument having a distal end and a proximal end, said instrument defining in part a progressively curved shaft portion positioned between distal and proximal ends with an attached insertion handle located at its proximal end, and a means for attaching said sling to the distal end of said shaft.

2. (currently amended) The ~~sling-transfer~~ surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the ~~first~~ insertion handle further comprises a digit control accommodation, said digit control accommodation dimensioned approximately 2.5 to 4.5 centimeters (cm) ~~em~~ in length, 1.0 to 4.0 cm in width and 1.5 cm in depth.

3. (currently amended) The ~~mesh-sling~~ surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the mesh ~~portion~~ section is comprised of non-absorbable polymers and filaments of ~~said~~ the mesh section have a diameter ~~from about~~ of approximately .002 inch to ~~about~~ .08 inch.

4. (currently amended) The ~~mesh-sling~~ surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the mesh portion section is comprised of absorbable polymers and filaments of ~~said~~ the mesh section have a diameter ~~from about~~ of approximately .012 inch to ~~about~~ 0.1 inch.

5. (currently amended) The ~~mesh-sling~~ surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the mesh portion section is approximately 60 cm in length, approximately 1.5 cm to 3.0 cm at its widest and generally ~~center-most position~~ center-most position, and approximately 1.0 cm wide at each of its opposite ends.

6. (currently amended) The ~~transfer~~ surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the progressively curved shaft portion has a diameter ~~from about~~ of approximately 3.5 millimeters (mm) ~~mm~~ to ~~about~~ 4.0 mm and a progressive curve with a maximum radius of approximately 5.1 cm.

7. (currently amended) The ~~transfer~~ surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the distal end of ~~said shaft portion~~ the sling transfer instrument is oriented in a direction opposite that of ~~said shaft's~~ the progressively curved shaft portion, ~~said~~ the distal end of ~~said~~ the progressively curved shaft portion being approximately 1.0 cm in length and approximately 4.0 mm in width. ~~width at an end opposite an end with handle attached to said shaft portion.~~

8. (currently amended) The ~~transfer~~ surgical instrument of claim 1 wherein the progressively curved shaft is further comprised of a luminous coating.

9-17. (withdrawn)

18. (currently amended) A suprapubic method for treating female urinary stress incontinence comprising:

- a) providing a sling defining in part a tissue remodeling portion and a mesh ~~section and section~~, the sling contoured to the anatomical configuration of the mid-urethra, proximal ~~urethra~~ urethra, and base of the bladder;
- b) providing a first sling transfer instrument having a distal end and a proximal end with a progressively curved shaft ~~portion~~ portion, the progressively curved shaft ~~portion~~ positioned between said ~~the~~ distal and proximal ends ~~with~~ and having an insertion handle located at the instrument's proximal end;
- c) positioning the insertion handle of the first sling transfer ~~instrument's insertion handle~~ instrument within the human hand and utilizing said ~~the~~ insertion handle to guide ~~the~~ a curved tip at the instrument's distal end through the abdominal ~~wall~~, wall and through the retropubic ~~space~~ space, allowing ~~allow~~ the tip of the instrument to be in contact with the posterior surface of the pubic bone as it traverses the retropubic ~~space~~, space and continues into the vagina;
- d) providing a second sling transfer instrument and repeating step (c) using the second sling transfer instrument;
- e) performing cystoscopy when the ~~tips of both instruments~~ curved tip of the first sling transfer instrument and the curved tip of the second sling transfer instrument are positioned within the vagina;
- f) attaching said ~~the~~ sling to ~~the each of the distal ends of the sling transfer instruments positioned in accordance with steps (e) and (d)~~; end of the first sling transfer instrument and the distal end of the second sling transfer instrument;
- g) withdrawing or otherwise positioning the distal ~~ends of the sling transfer instruments positioned in accordance with steps (e) and (d)~~ end of the first sling transfer instrument and the distal end of the second sling transfer instrument to cause the attached sling to form a U-shape around mid-urethral and bladder neck sphincter continence sites; and
- h) displacing said ~~the~~ sling from the first and second sling transfer instruments.

19. (original) The method of claim 18 further comprising the adjusting of sling tension via a sling tension measurement component.

20–21. (withdrawn)